What are the various lengths of Biblical cubits?

Biblical cubits fall into two main categories: the shorter "common cubit" and the longer "royal cubit," with the latter typically used for large-scale construction projects like Solomon's Temple and Noah's Ark.[1] [2]

Primary Cubit Categories

The **short cubit** equals six handbreadths (from elbow to tip of middle finger), while the **long cubit** (also called the royal cubit) equals seven handbreadths—essentially a short cubit plus one handbreadth. Ezekiel's vision mentions this distinction explicitly, describing a measuring rod of six cubits "each of which was a cubit and a handbreadth".[3] [4]

Biblical Cubit Measurements

Cubit Type	Length (inches)	Length (cm)
Hebrew (short)	17.5	44.5 [1] [2]
Egyptian	17.6	44.7 [1] [2]
Common (short)	18.0	45.7 [2]
Babylonian Long	19.8	50.3 [1] [2]
Hebrew Long	20.4	51.8 [1] [2]
Egyptian Long	20.6	52.3–52.5 [1] [5] [6]
Ezekiel's (cubit + handbreadth)	~21	~53.3 [3]

Biblical Usage

Solomon built the Temple using cubits of "the former measure" or "old standard"—indicating the long cubit was the older, more traditional measurement. The Hebrew short cubit (17.5 inches) derives from measurements of Hezekiah's Tunnel, which the Siloam Inscription records as 1,200 cubits. For large construction projects like Noah's Ark, the royal cubit (approximately 19.8–20.6 inches) was more likely employed.[2] [7] [8] [1]

1. https://arkencounter.com/noahs-ark/cubit/
2. https://www.biblicalauthorityministries.org/2025/04/how-long-was-original-cubit.html
3. https://biblehub.com/topical/t/the_cubit.htm

4. https://armstronginstitute.org/1021-solomonic-cubits
5. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1155/2014/489757
6. https://library.biblicalarchaeology.org/sidebar/measurements-in-the-bible-evidence-at-st-etienne-for-the-length-of-the-cubit-and-the-reed/
7. https://arkencounter.com/blog/2019/02/08/how-long-is-a-cubit/
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